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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000984

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: MAOIST CHAIRMAN SEEKS TERRORIST DE-LISTING

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Jeffrey A. Moon. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal (aka Prachanda) told Charge he would like to build confidence and relations between the Maoist party and the United States. Dahal also expressed interest in taking steps to remove his party from the U.S. terrorist exclusion lists. He insisted the Maoists remain committed to concluding the peace process, including the discharge of disqualified combatants, but failure to reach consensus with the coalition political parties would force the Maoists to mobilize. End summary.

Removal from Terrorist Exclusion Lists

¶2. (C) During an early morning meeting at Pushpa Kamal Dahal's residence on October 28, the Maoist chairman told Charge he was eager to develop relations between the Maoists and the United States and to readdress the party's removal from U.S. terrorist exclusion lists. Dahal questioned why previous discussions with the U.S. side had stalled. He noted his desire to resume discussion and build confidence between the Maoists and the United States. Charge said all of the criteria U.S. officials had given the Maoists remained, and now was the time to move beyond general discussion to specific actions. Charge said this would be difficult to accomplish if the Maoists used undemocratic methods to force their way into power.

Challenges to Peace Process

¶3. (C) Dahal insisted the Maoists want the peace process to succeed and are willing to compromise with the other parties to draft the constitution, but there are "ups and downs, twists and turns" to challenge progress. He alluded to "some elements" in the coalition parties who, uncomfortable with the process because they would not benefit politically, took "unconstitutional steps" to prevent the Maoists from leading the government. The Maoist chairman criticized the parliament for not allowing the Maoists to discuss the President's role and civilian supremacy over the Nepal Army. He also complained the Government of India is hesitant to support the Maoists. He said the United States, along with the Europeans and the UN, could play an important, supportive role.

¶4. (C) Charge cautioned Dahal to "be careful what you wish

for" -- and to be mindful of precedents the Maoists have set as the opposition. Other parties might reciprocate protests, vandalism and blockades if the Maoists were to return to power. Charge pointed to an attack by the Maoist Young Communist League (YCL) against Nepali Congress (NC) leader Sher Bahadur Deuba in Chitwan on October 27, which injured approximately 20 NC and YCL activists. (Note: Deuba was not injured, but his vehicle was damaged.) Dahal said the YCL had told him the NC activists had attacked them first. He said the Maoists have issued an ultimatum on the current political negotiations and would be forced to mobilize -- albeit peacefully. He said he hoped to reach a consensus with the coalition parties in "four or five days."

15. (C) Dahal declared that "some people" like to create conflict and provoke the Maoists to take to the streets, but the Maoists have concluded that peace is the way to go. Dahal claimed the Maoists tried to establish a peaceful, disciplined way to protest. He reiterated his party could use more U.S. cooperation in pursuing peaceful goals. Almost as an afterthought, Dahal added the Maoists have begun internal discussions on how to re-open parliament even if a consensus could not be reached. He said the Maoists would focus on the current government's failures if they could not talk about the President's actions. He asked Charge not to publicize the Maoists' tentative willingness to back down.

Discharge of Disqualified from Cantonments

16. (C) Dahal said there is no controversy within the Maoist party regarding integration and rehabilitation of former

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combatants, but the other parties needed not to act against the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Accord. Sidestepping Charge's question about what exactly would be required for the Maoists to take steps to discharge 4,008 disqualified combatants from the cantonments, the Maoist chairman said the process could be finalized within a month. Charge stated the international community is ready to provide support, but the Maoists would have to prove their commitment. Dahal said he needed to discuss the specifics with the UN Mission in Nepal and the UN Development Program (the latter of which would fund rehabilitation for minors), after which the process could proceed.

Comment

17. (C) The Maoist chairman answered Charge's questions vaguely and provided no insight into his party's maneuverings. He seemed dismissive of the idea that what goes around comes around, and he appeared to see no discrepancy between spouting commitment to the peace process and being "forced" to obstruct the functioning of government. Post remains skeptical of the Maoists' true devotion to the peace process -- all of the recent actions of the party and its leader indicate their only goal is return to power. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by Dahal's confession that the Maoists would consider a compromise if the political parties refuse the ultimatum to discuss civilian supremacy in parliament and to step aside for the Maoists to take over.
MOON